



BoltFanInSanAntone
The Monkey's Wingman

Join Date: Apr 2004
Location: Crest subdivision of El Cajon
Posts: 51,428

Re: Stolen Valor

Phony War Hero Gets 18 Months Jail Time

October 22, 2009

Associated Press

Phony War Hero Gets 18 Months Jailtime

QUANTICO, Va. -- A Marine Corps sergeant was sentenced Wednesday to 18 months confinement and fined \$25,000 for pretending to be an injured war hero to get free seats at rock concerts and professional sporting events.

Sgt. David W. Budwah also will be reduced in rank to private and dishonorably discharged after any appeals. He must forfeit all pay and benefits during his confinement and is subject to up to 3 1/2 years of additional prison time if he re-offends within two years.

Navy Capt. Bruce W. MacKenzie, chief judge for the Navy and Marine Corps, gave the sentence after Budwah pleaded guilty to seven counts in a military courtroom on the Marine Corps Base in Quantico, Va. The offenses included making false statements, malingering, misconduct and unlawful appropriation, and carried a combined maximum prison term of 8 1/2 years.

Budwah, 34, of Springhill, La., acknowledged during the hearing that he was never deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan, as he had claimed. He said he lied about having helped with the 2004 tsunami relief effort and didn't earn eight medals and ribbons he wore on his uniform.

"The truth of it is, I was never deployed and I was never injured," Budwah said. "Everything that I said was false."

He was actually a radio operator in Okinawa, Japan, from early 2000 to early 2006, when he was transferred to Quantico and worked as a retail store stock clerk and warehouse laborer.

He admitted to bluffing his way into 13 events last year including banquets; Counting Crows, Boston and Collective Soul concerts; a Washington Redskins football game; and a Washington Nationals baseball game.

He also lied to obtain a laptop computer and personal digital assistant from Soldiers' Angels, an organization that helps wounded service members.

"It does a lot of damage," Kassie Claughton, a Soldiers' Angels representative, testified. "People who actually have been in combat - it kind of neglects what they're going through."

Budwah acknowledged he lied when he told young boys at an American Legion camp in western Maryland in July 2008 that he was wounded in Afghanistan when he dove on a homemade grenade to shield a buddy from the blast.

He apologized to those he deceived, especially workers and volunteers at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., where he was an inpatient during the second half of 2008.

"You were only trying to help me and I betrayed that trust," Budwah said.

He said he initially was sent to the hospital for outpatient treatment for stomach problems and then became depressed and suicidal after a romantic relationship - his first since a divorce - ended in April 2008.

He said he started lying because he liked the treatment at Bethesda and wanted to fit in with the wounded warriors he had befriended.

"It seemed if I had that - something similar to everybody else - that would make me feel more like a crowd or a group of people," Budwah told the judge.

The prosecutor, Marine Capt. Thomas Liu, said Budwah had besmirched the Marine Corps' integrity.

"Let there be no mistake - the services and gifts that the accused obtained, they were not free. But their value is overshadowed by the benevolent intent of the people who gave them. That is the violation here today," Liu said.

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<http://www.military.com/news/article...ail-time.html?>

June Cleaver: You were a little tough on the Beaver last night, Ward.

"Lest I keep my complacent way I must remember somewhere out there a person died for me today. As long as there must be war, I ask and I must answer was I worth dying for?"

Eleanor Roosevelt



10-23-2009, 05:37 PM

#8



BoltFanInSanAntone
The Monkey's Wingman

Join Date: Apr 2004
Location: Crest subdivision of El Cajon
Posts: 51,428

Re: Stolen Valor

CBI asked to investigate man's death

Ronald Crumley had been accused of lying about his military record.

By ANTHONY A. MESTAS

THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

SUGAR CITY - The Crowley County veterans affairs officer who military historians say lied about being a prisoner of war died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound last week, the Crowley County Sheriff's Department announced Wednesday.

According to the sheriff's department, Ronald Crumley shot himself Oct. 13 in his vehicle during a standoff with police. Crumley's age was not released.

Crowley County Undersheriff Steve Becker said the matter is under review by the Colorado Bureau of Investigation and that he could not release much information regarding Crumley's death.

Becker said he and other deputies witnessed Crumley's death.

"Basically, it was a gunshot suicide and none of our officers discharged any lethal weapons," Becker said. Becker said that rumors that he smashed a window and possibly caused Crumley to discharge the weapon are not true.

"All I can tell you is that it was a very sad sequence of events leading up to a suicide. CBI has found that we did everything we could to try and prevent it," Becker said.

Becker said that because he and his deputies were closely involved with the incident, he wanted an outside agency to review the case.

"That's why we called CBI," he said.

Becker said more information surrounding Crumley's death will be released later this month.

Earlier this year, military historians said that Crumley had violated the federal Stolen Valor Act, which includes penalties for those who falsely assert they were POWs. The historians said Crumley never was a prisoner of war.

Crumley had been listed on POWnetwork.org under its "phonies and wannabes" section as claiming to be a Vietnam prisoner of war.

In July, Crumley denied the accusations and said he would prove that he was a POW at a meeting with military officers. The meeting never was held.

Crumley allegedly claimed to have been captured in I Corps and was held as a prisoner of war in South Vietnam for three years before escaping.

anthonym@chieftain.com

<http://www.chieftain.com/articles/20...e474213421.txt>

June Cleaver: You were a little tough on the Beaver last night, Ward.

"Lest I keep my complacent way I must remember somewhere out there a person died for me today. As long as there must be war, I ask and I must answer was I worth dying for?"

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wounded.<snip>

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"Lest I keep my complacent way I must remember somewhere out there a person died for me today. As long as there must be war, I ask and I must answer was I worth dying for?"

Eleanor Roosevelt



05-15-2009, 07:44 AM

#3



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Join Date: Apr 2004
Location: Crest subdivision of El Cajon
Posts: 51,428

Re: Stolen Valor

Another one bites the dust

Relieved of duty : A veteran recently featured for falsifying his military record lost his job as a bailiff.

By Tabatha Hunter Staff Writer tabathah@nwanews.com

Posted on Friday, May 1, 2009

<snip>BENTONVILLE - James Holland has been released from his duties as bailiff for Circuit Court Judge Doug Schrantz after Sheriff Keith Ferguson pulled Holland's commission with the Sheriff's Office on Thursday. Holland's termination comes on the heels of a Daily Record report detailing his military career. In previous stories, Holland claimed to be an Army Ranger and a member of the Special Forces, commonly known as the Green Berets. Holland also said he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the Silver Star. These claims proved to be false.

Before Holland was hired by the Sheriff's Office, he submitted a type-written military biographical summary. In that summary, Holland claims to have been awarded the Silver Star, the Special Forces tab and the Ranger tab.

Holland, in fact, did not receive the Silver Star. He was not in the Special Forces, and he was not a Ranger.

"I have never been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross or the Silver Star," Holland previously told a Daily Record reporter.

"You do not see me wearing a Green Beret or Ranger tab," Holland said of the claims for the Special Forces tab and the Ranger tab listed in the military biography provided to the Sheriff's Office by Holland.<snip>

June Cleaver: You were a little tough on the Beaver last night, Ward.

"Lest I keep my complacent way I must remember somewhere out there a person died for me today. As long as there must be war, I ask and I must answer was I worth dying for?"

Eleanor Roosevelt



05-26-2009, 11:36 AM

#4



BoltFanInSanAntone
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Join Date: Apr 2004
Location: Crest subdivision of El Cajon
Posts: 51,428

Fake veteran faces 'stolen valor' charge

updated 1:05 p.m. EDT, Mon October 12, 2009

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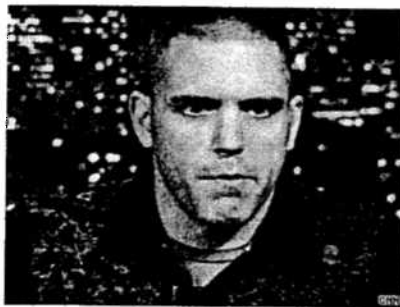
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STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Richard Strandlof said he survived 9/11 Pentagon attack, Iraq bombing
- In June, Strandlof admitted he lied
- Penalty for stolen valor is up to one year in jail, up to \$100,000 fine
- Strandlof formed Colorado Veterans Alliance

Next Article in Crime »

(CNN) -- Richard Strandlof said he survived the 9/11 attacks on the Pentagon. He said he survived again when a roadside bomb went off in Iraq, killing four fellow Marines. He'd point to his head and tell people he had a metal plate, collateral damage from the explosion.



Richard Strandlof says he didn't mean to cause harm when he lied about being a military veteran.

None of it was true. On Friday, the FBI arrested him on the rare charge of "stolen valor."

Strandlof, 32, was held "for false claims about receipt of military decorations or medals," an FBI news release said. Charges had been filed in Denver, Colorado, the week before, the bureau said.

"The penalty for his crime is up to one year incarceration and a \$100,000 fine," it said.

Before his deception was revealed, crowds ate up his story. He canvassed Colorado appearing at the sides of politicians. Inspiring and seemingly authentic, he spoke on behalf of veterans at the state Capitol.

He formed a group called the Colorado Veterans Alliance.

The whole thing was a lie, he admitted to CNN's Anderson Cooper earlier this year.

[Watch Strandlof discuss case in June.](#) »

He wasn't at the Pentagon. He was never a Marine. He never served his country. He never graduated from the Naval Academy. He claimed his real name was Rick Duncan.

Where was he on 9/11, the day he said he witnessed heroism firsthand?

"I was in San Jose, California, watching it in horror on TV with a few other people," Strandlof told CNN.

He was at a homeless shelter at the time.

Strandlof denies being a pathological liar. He says he suffered from "some severely underdiagnosed mental illness" and he got caught up in the moment around "people who are passionate and loved what they did."

He told CNN he had put on a "production, which I'm sorry for."

"Hopefully the people that I hurt can in some way gain closure from that, and I myself don't know what I can do, short of leaving them alone and not being in their lives, to make that happen," Strandlof said.

He said he's not sure exactly how he's hurt people. "It's not for me to say, and time will tell," he said.

Hal Bidlack, a former Air Force lieutenant colonel, is one of those people. He ran for Congress as a Democrat and had Strandlof appear with him. Bidlack -- who lost to incumbent Republican Doug Lamborn -- isn't too happy.

"Once one lie fell apart, the whole series of things ... just cascaded into an ocean of lies," he said.

Bidlack was at the Pentagon when it came under attack on September 11, 2001. He now realizes that Strandlof stole portions of his own story.

"Now that we know he's a lying fraud," Bidlack said, "I think he was just parroting my own story back to me."

"There are an awful lot of things that he kept straight to try to fool an awful lot of people for an awful long time."

Doug Sterner has catalogued hundreds of people claiming to be military veterans who never served in the military. He says it's typical for those perpetuating the hoaxes to claim mental illness.

"I don't buy that," Sterner said. "What he was doing was looking for a cause to promote himself. I see this repeatedly. I've had a hundred cases just this year like Rick Strandlof's. ... What they're doing is building a kingdom of self and feeding their own ego."

Sterner has pushed for a federal database listing the names and citations of all decorated military veterans to help put an end to such cases. He said Strandlof has robbed true veterans of their veracity.

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Memorial caretaker faces Stolen Valor charges

By Dan Lamothe - Staff writer

Posted : Sunday Oct 4, 2009 10:55:03 EDT

Three years ago, Katie Valentino visited the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial, a granite and bronze monument in Sacramento dedicated to the 5,822 service members from the Golden State who died or disappeared during the war.

After shooting some photographs, she was stopped by Kenneth Nelson, who introduced himself as a retired gunnery sergeant and Vietnam veteran. He spent the next 45 minutes telling her stories about the war, she said, including how his own commanding officer died in his hands.

"You never forget seeing death," she called him telling her.

Valentino, a mental health professional from Bloomingdale, Ill., is one of the many visitors with whom Nelson, 60, shared such stories during his 19-year run caring for the memorial. He polished it regularly, telling journalists who flocked to do stories about him that the volunteer work helped him cope with memories of the war's bloodiest battles.

U.S. authorities now say none of his claims are true. He will be arraigned Oct. 2 in Sacramento on charges he allegedly wore three unauthorized Purple Hearts and a Silver Star, and that he lied to FBI agents investigating his claims, according to an affidavit filed Sept. 10.

In reality, Nelson never served in combat with the "Walking Dead" of 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, despite his claims of surviving a head wound and a napalm burn during service that included battles at Khe Sanh, Con Thien and Quang Tri, the indictment said. He enlisted in 1977 but lasted less than two months before being discharged as a private at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Marine officials said. He did not graduate from boot camp.

OTHER CLAIMS?

Although the indictment focuses on a single incident in which Nelson allegedly wore unauthorized medals, authorities believe "there were claims to other various medals," said U.S. Attorney Camil Skipper, who is prosecuting the case. Nelson is listed as a recipient of valorous medals on Web sites such as americasveterans.org, which says he earned the Navy Cross — the nation's second highest award for valor — the Silver Star, the Bronze Star with V and three Purple Hearts.

In a telephone interview, Nelson said he will face his charges "like a man," but he denied ever wearing unauthorized medals. He declined to say whether he served in Vietnam, citing the open case.

"I don't think I did anything wrong. I had too much respect for those guys on the wall," he said, referring to names memorialized on the monument.

Pressed for details on his service, Nelson accused the media of distorting his service record in previously published reports, and he suggested the nonprofit organization Vietnam Veterans of America was out to get him.

"My main function was to protect that memorial and to protect a piece of history," he said. "I'm just the little guy."

Dick Southern, director of VVA's California region, dismissed Nelson's accusations.

"The fact that he watched over a memorial or helped maintain a memorial doesn't give him the right to say he's something that he's not," Southern said. "If all the things [he is accused of] are true, then he deserves the punishment he is going to get."

**UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
Western District of Washington**



September 21, 2007

**NORTHWEST CRACKDOWN ON FAKE VETERANS IN
"OPERATION STOLEN VALOR"**

**Phony Vets Scam more than \$1.4 Million and
Damage Image of Honorable Veterans**

U.S. Attorney Jeffrey C. Sullivan today announced some of the results of "Operation Stolen Valor," a year long effort to investigate and prosecute those who lie about their military service for financial gain or other reasons. Sullivan and Doug Carver, Special Agent in Charge of the Veteran's Affairs Office of Inspector General detailed eight prosecutions in the Veteran's Affairs Northwest Region in 2007.

"As a Vietnam Veteran, and the father of a decorated Army officer currently serving, I feel very keenly the damage done by Jesse Macbeth and these other fakes," said Jeff Sullivan, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Washington. "Macbeth's lies fueled hostility to our servicemen in Iraq and here at home. Those who falsely claim medals for heroism, cheapen the recognition of our true war heroes."

"The 'phony war hero phenomenon' plagues the American landscape and tarnishes the service of thousands of veterans who have served honorably. It strangles VA resources from providing critical care and benefits to deserving veterans returning from war," said Douglas J. Carver, Special Agent in Charge of the VA Office of Inspector General, Western Field Office. "It all boils down to this: these phonies submit claims to the VA for compensation and medical benefits they are not entitled to, and it takes away valuable resources from those who are entitled."

In a dozen cases under investigation in the northwest, the fraud totals more than \$1.4 million. Eight of the cases have been publicly filed and are in various stages of being adjudicated:

*Jesse Macbeth, 23, Tacoma, Washington, sentenced today in connection with his fraudulent claims of military service. Macbeth sought medical benefits claiming to suffer from PTSD related to service in Iraq and Afghanistan, in fact, Macbeth was discharged from the Army about a month after he joined. Macbeth never traveled outside the U.S. with the Army. Macbeth duped reporters, claiming to be a decorated Army Ranger who had witnessed war crimes.

*Reggie Buddle, 60, Puyallup, Washington, sentenced July 30, 2007, for Unlawful Wearing of United States Military Medals and Decorations. Buddle posed as a decorated Marine Corps Chaplain presiding over weddings, funerals and baptisms. Buddle was sentenced to 500 hours of community service and two years of probation.

*Larry Lewis Porter, 52, Seattle, Washington, sentenced April 19, 2007, for Mail Fraud in connection with a scheme to fraudulently obtain disability benefits from Veterans Affairs. Porter was sentenced to 37 months in prison. Porter claimed he suffered PTSD from experiences in the Navy, however investigation revealed the events were fabricated. Loss Amount: \$134,000

*Roy J. Scott, 71, of Port Angeles, Washington pleaded guilty August 31, 2007, to Use of an Altered Military Discharge Certificate to obtain VA Compensation and Medical Benefits, and Unlawful Wearing of United States Military Medals and Decorations. Scott claimed he had served in the Marine Corps in Korea, that he was wounded in combat in Korea, and that he had been awarded the Korea Defense Medal, Korea Star Medal, and a Purple Heart (due to alleged gun shot wounds sustained during combat in Korea). Scott claimed to be honorably discharged, when in fact, he never earned those medals, never served in Korea or any foreign country and was Court-Martialed out of the Marine Corps. Loss Amount: \$21,960.

*Merrick K. Hersey, 64, of Vancouver, Washington, Hersey was indicted August 1, 2007, for Use and Possession of Forged or Altered Military Discharge Certificate and False Statements. Hersey is a fugitive and is being sought by law enforcement. Hersey applied for benefits claiming he served in 1967-68, was awarded two Purple Hearts (for wounds sustained in active combat) and the Bronze Star (awarded for heroism). Hersey claimed he suffered from PTSD and sought benefits. In fact, Hersey never served in the Marine Corps at all. Loss Amount: \$2,688.

*Michael D. Heit, 58, of Harrington, Washington, pleaded guilty yesterday (September 20, 2007) in U.S. District Court in Spokane, Washington to Use and Possession of a Forged or Altered Military Discharge Certificate and False Claims of Military Medals. Heit claimed he was a Vietnam vet who was held as a prisoner of war. He claimed to have been awarded three Purple Heart medals and the Silver Star. None of that is true. Loss Amount: \$3,500

*Elvin J. Swisher, 70, of Idaho, is charged with Wearing Unauthorized Military Medals, False Statements, and Theft of Government Funds. Swisher falsely claimed he was wounded in Korea and that he had been awarded the Silver Star, Purple Heart and other medals for valor. Loss Amount: \$95,000.

*Carlos Riosvalle, 83, of Portland, Oregon, was sentenced April 9, 2007, in Multnomah County for multiple counts of Theft by Deception. Riosvalle collected benefits claiming to have been "shot down while a pilot in World War II." In fact Riosvalle never served in the armed forces. Loss Amount: \$22,818.

These cases were all investigated by the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General VA-OIG. The VA Office of the Inspector General operates a HOTLINE for the public to confidentially and safely report crimes like "Stolen Valor" involving VA or its programs. Call 800-488-8244, or fax to 202-565-7936, or e-mail to vaighotline@va.gov, or write to VA OIG HOTLINE, PO Box 50410, Washington, DC 20091-0410.

The cases filed in the Western District of Washington are being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Ronald J. Friedman. For additional information please contact Emily Langlie, Public Affairs Officer for the United States Attorney's Office, at (206) 553-4110.

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